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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Tuesday, November 28, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "HOLIDAY FOOD QUESTIONS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

If there's one time more than another when the mailbag fills up with questions about food, this is the time. The questions this week cover everything on the holiday menu from onion soup to pie crust made with nuts--and then some.

So without further ado, here come the questions followed by answers from food specialists of the Bureau of Home Economics.

The first question comes from a housewife who is doing her bit toward using this season's plentiful crop of onions. She writes: "Please tell me exactly how to make the nice thick French onion soup that is served with bread and cheese on top."

Here's how to make onion soup. Soup enough for 6 people calls for 6 medium-sized onions, chopped fine. Cook the chopped onion in butter or bacon fat until the onion turns yellow. Then let the onion simmer in a pint of hot water for about 20 minutes--or until tender. Now add a quart of meat broth. When the mixture is hot, thicken with a paste of 4 tablespoons of flour and 4 tablespoons of cold water. Season with salt and pepper. Cook a few minutes and your soup is ready to go into hot bowls. Put a slice of toast on top of each bowl of soup. Then sprinkle grated cheese all over the top of soup and toast.

This is a delicious, economical and hearty soup. It is just the right start for a light meal, but too hearty as an introduction to any big dinner.

The second question brings up another of this year's big crops--nuts. Here's the question: "I have heard about pie crust made with chopped nuts. It sounds good.

How do I make it?"

Pie crust made with nuts is good, especially if you use pecans or other nuts very rich in oil. Use your standard recipe for plain piecrust and substitute finely ground pecans for half the fat the recipe calls for. Mix and bake the nut crust just as you would plain pie crust. If you want to feature the nuts even more, you can sprinkle chopped nuts over the meringue of the pie just before serving. Nut pastry is especially good with a cream filling.

Another letter contains this question: "What nuts are best in stuffing for roast poultry?"

You can make delicious stuffing using chopped blanched almonds, pecans, walnuts, or cooked chestnuts. For wild fowl a nice stuffing centains hazelnuts and brown or wild rice combined with the usual onion, celery and seasonings.

Here's an old familiar question about honey: "Why is honey better for sweetening fruit cakes, steamed pudding and soft cookies than for ginger snaps and hard candy?"

The answer is: Honey takes up moisture. So honey in fruit cake, steamed pudding and soft cookies helps keep these foods moist as you want them to be. If you use honey in ginger snaps and hard candy, it will tend toward making them moist, too--as you don't want them.

The frosting for the holiday cake is the problem in this letter. Here's the letter: "My frosting sometimes comes out too soft so that it runs off the cake. Again it comes out so hard that I can't spread it evenly. Is there any remedy for underdone or overdone frosting?"

Fortunately, yes. If the frosting is soft and not cooked enough put it back in the double boiler and let it cook over boiling water for a few minutes more. If the frosting is overdone so that it is too stiff, add a little water and let it cook again in the double boiler.

By the way, the double boiler is a boon to every cook who makes frosting. Most good cooks today know the trick of putting the sugar, salt, water and unbeaten egg white in the upper part of the boiler over boiling water and then beating the mixture as it cooks for about 10 minutes. The frosting then looks like ordinary boiled frosting and should be almost thick enough to spread. Take it from the stove add vanilla and continue beating until it is just right to spread and holds its shape on the beater.

The last question also happens to be about cake frosting. "Please tell me how to make boiled chocolate frosting."

For chocolate frosting add squares of unsweetened chocolate to the hot vanilla frosting just before removing it from the stove. Beat until the chocolate melts and the frosting again becomes thick. Continue beating when you have removed it from the stove until it is just right to spread.

That's all the questions we have time for today. More next week.